

# The SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE SECTION

A Magazine for your Reading Table

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS' PAGE

**W**HY should there be 17,000,000 unmarried men and women in the United States? And the death rate be higher among these people than it is among married people?

These two questions which reach so deeply into the heart of human affairs and which bear so directly upon eugenics and the perpetuity of our race, have been widely commented upon by the press since they were recently propounded by the Equitable Life Assurance Society in connection with its study of national mortality conditions.

Keen public interest in this subject is a good sign, for a nation like ours with a declining birth rate, and with the extreme span of life being shortened by an increase in the death rate in middle life and old age, has good reason to give serious thought to the problems involved.

For it is obvious that if the millions, or a portion of the millions, of the unmarried who are physically and mentally fit, were married, our declining birth rate would not only be checked, without necessarily increasing the average size of families, but the proportion of the physically and mentally fit among the new lives that are being brought into the world would be increased.

"The high cost of living" is generally urged as the cause of our excessive number of unmarried people.

**U**NDoubtedly this has had some adverse influence on marriage. But we will have to go deeper to find the real cause. This explanation is generally based upon two faulty assumptions; namely, that the proportion of unmarried people is increasing, and that people do not marry as early in life as formerly.

It may be true that fewer and later marriages are occurring in certain social levels, but the census shows that there are proportionately more people marrying now in the younger age periods than 25 years ago, and that the proportion of single people has actually decreased. In 1890 it was 37 per cent, in 1900 35.8 per cent, in 1910 34.4 per cent.

While this indicates a trend in the right direction, the fact remains that, notwithstanding our highly developed civilization and our unparalleled era of prosperity, we still have the enormous number of 17,000,000 unpaired people of marriageable age in the U. S. A.

If we assert that this condition is due in any considerable degree to the present high cost of living, how will we account for the still greater proportion of unmarried people in 1890, when the cost of supporting a family was so much less than it is now?

The suggestion that many women workers prefer the comforts and independence provided by their own savings, to the sacrifice and dependence that would follow marriage to men drawing the same



### WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLERGY

By E. E. Rittenhouse  
Equitable Conservation Commissioner

the whole population, but such data covering the population of New York State, outside of the metropolis, has recently been collected and analyzed.

This shows that the death rate of single men is greater than that of married men by 57 per cent from ages 20-29, by 119 per cent from ages 30-39 and by 105 per cent from ages 40-49. This difference among women is not so great, although the trend is the same.

Making due allowance for errors, these averages are of interest as showing that a man is a better risk, who has been passed upon and approved by a woman, than is a bachelor. A large number of sick and impaired lives are of course kept out of the married group by the natural and instinctive reluctance of afflicted people to marry.

The young woman in selecting her husband, is apt not only to use her heart, but her intelligence as well. Naturally, the heart chooses from natural attraction; that is, the vigorous strong man who has in his make-up the potential powers of fighting disease. Her intelligence selects the man who can protect her and provide for herself and children. Logically the tendencies of the average woman is to reject a man of bad habits, while the man is often less exacting, being influenced more by mere impulse.

**A**NOTHER important factor in promoting longevity among married men is that their lives are not only more orderly and better regulated, but they are better supervised. The average wife, solicitous of her husband's health, warns him and adds her influence to his natural desire to protect his health and life for his family's sake as well as for his own. Married life is conducive to longevity, as shown by the fact that the indicated death rate in this group is much lower than in the single group. For this reason, as well as that of increasing insurable interest, life insurance companies prefer to insure married men.

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*E. E. Rittenhouse*